

**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

**Eighty-third Session  
May 6, 2025**

The Senate Committee on Judiciary was called to order by Chair Melanie Scheible at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, in Room 1214 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 6 of the Nevada Legislature Hearing Rooms, 7120 Amigo Street, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the attendance roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Senator Melanie Scheible, Chair  
Senator Edgar Flores, Vice Chair  
Senator James Ohrenschall  
Senator Roberta Lange  
Senator Rochelle T. Nguyen  
Senator Ira Hansen  
Senator Lisa Krasner  
Senator John Ellison

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Assemblymember Alexis M. Hansen, Assembly District No. 32  
Assemblymember Jovan A. Jackson, Assembly District No. 6

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Jered McDonald, Committee Policy Analyst  
Brad Wilkinson, Committee Counsel  
Michael Scully, Committee Counsel  
Timothy Gibbs, Committee Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Sitara Reganti, Nevada Youth Legislator, Senatorial District No. 15  
Nick Shepack, Fines and Fees Justice Center  
Angela Knott, Washoe County Public Defender's Office

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Addison Clark  
Sabrina Schnur, Nevada Psychiatric Association  
Harrison Epstein, Clark County Public Defender's Office  
Denise Bolaños Heredia, Return Strong!  
Sebastian Rios  
Elizabeth Florez, Director, Department of Juvenile Services, Washoe County  
Shaun Griffin, Nevada Prison Education Project  
Paloma Guerrero, Clark County Public Defender's Office  
Tara Webster, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada  
Doug Unger, Nevada Prison Education Project

CHAIR SCHEIBLE:

I will open up the hearing on Assembly Bill (A.B.) 167.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 167 (1st Reprint)**: Revises provisions relating to the use of  
corrective room restriction. (BDR 5-769)

ASSEMBLYMEMBER ALEXIS M. HANSEN (Assembly District No. 32):

You should have a copy of the recent amendment ([Exhibit C](#)) from Clark County which is a friendly amendment. We are so grateful for the collaboration that we have had with Clark County and other stakeholders on this important bill. To give a little history on how this bill came to my attention, I had the honor of working with the Youth Legislature last fall for some of their meetings, and I happened to be there when it was time for them to whittle down which legislative bill they would bring; they are allowed by statute to bring one bill to the Legislature.

While I was there and they were presenting five of the bills, I had the opportunity to hear Sitara Reganti, my copresenter. She had an actual bill at the Youth Legislature. Hers did not make the final cut, and they had a lot of good ones to pick from, but I was quite impressed because hers dealt with—we will say for terminology's sake—solitary confinement regarding youth that are in[carcerated in] facilities. I know that in this Legislature we had dealt with adult solitary confinement last session and did some reforms, so I was intrigued. We met, and we talked about her concerns. I said, "You know, maybe I could carry this as one of my bill draft requests," and that began our relationship.

I think she will confirm that what she, and even us in the adult Legislature, have learned in this process is that we have an idea, we want to help and solve

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problems, and then we get into the layers of it and we realize maybe there are not some of the problems that we were concerned about, which is a good thing. But, if there are still some remaining things, [we want to fix them].

We really want to give a shout-out to our youth juvenile justice folks in the State and in the municipalities; they are doing a really great job. We're here to maybe help fine-tune a couple of things.

SITARA REGANTI (Nevada Youth Legislator, Senatorial District No. 15):

I would like to thank Assemblymember Hansen for sponsoring this bill and guiding me through this process. Additionally, I would like to recognize Jeff Rogan from Clark County, whose support and collaboration with county facilities has been instrumental in shaping the bill before you today.

Earlier this year, the State Youth Legislature asked each of us to oppose a bill. I spent hours reading through past legislation looking for gaps and thinking seriously about the kind of change I wanted to bring to our State. I kept coming back to our justice system, specifically juvenile justice, an area that is not always in the spotlight yet has a lasting impact on the lives of young people.

A few months prior, I had met a woman in Washington, D.C., who worked with the Center for Children's Law and Policy. She spoke to me about the Stop Solitary for Kids campaign which opened my eyes to the possible emotional harm isolation can have on young people. That conversation stayed with me, and when I returned to our State, I began researching our policies on corrective room restriction—a term that, while clinical, often translates to a young person spending hours and sometimes days alone in a confined space away from the support systems they need most.

When Assemblymember Hansen offered to sponsor this bill, I got to work speaking with stakeholders, listening to their concerns and learning from their experiences. I also visited the correctional facility here in Carson City. I wanted to see what corrective room restrictions looked like. I am 17 years old, and I spoke with two other 17-year-olds who are currently in [corrective] room confinement. They shared why they have been placed in isolation, how long they had been there and how it felt. That visit solidified [the fact] that A.B. 167 matters. It matters because juveniles in custody are still juveniles, many of whom are dealing with trauma, mental health struggles or just trying to find

their footing. They are still developing emotionally and neurologically, and we owe it to them to ensure our systems are not making that development harder.

According to a report from the Nevada Association of Juvenile Justice Administrators, "Over 55 percent of youth within the juvenile justice system have at least one mental health diagnosis." The original version of this bill called for mandatory mental health visits for youths placed in room confinement. After extensive discussions with stakeholders, including detention officials and facility staff, we made adjustments to better reflect the operational needs of these institutions while still prioritizing the mental health of our youth. The result is the first reprint which retains the bill's core purpose to ensure mental health is not ignored in room confinement decisions.

With a minor amendment to the first reprint, the language now reads:

A child who is subjected to corrective room restriction for more than 24 hours must be provided: ... a review of the corrective room restriction status by a member of the staff of the facility at least once every 24 hours. Any such review must include, without limitation, a review of whether a referral for a mental health screening, evaluation or treatment is appropriate. If, upon review, the corrective room restriction is continued, the continuation must be documented in writing, including, without limitation, an explanation as to why no other less-restrictive option is available.

Assembly Bill 167 introduces accountability, ensuring that [corrective] room confinement is not used excessively, and it places mental health at the forefront of the decision-making for youth in custody. At its heart, this bill is about balance. It recognizes the responsibility of staff to maintain safety while also recognizing that punitive isolation without reflection or support does not serve the long-term well-being of the child or the community they will return to. I am proud to bring A.B. 167 forward as a young Nevadan who believes in second chances and the power of rehabilitation.

SENATOR ELLISON:

You did a wonderful job; [you were] very, very good. I have never seen a juvenile in this way because I have seen them in Elko. If they are confined in these areas and do have mental problems, it says here [that] they check in on

them every ten minutes. Is there a restroom in these cubicles, or do they take them out? How do they do that?

Ms. REGANTI:

When I visit these facilities, they usually do have a toilet in the confinement room, but they have a separate room for showering.

SENATOR ELLISON:

Do they still check them every ten minutes? They look through the window, I imagine. Is that it?

Ms. REGANTI:

Yes, they look through the window and make sure they are okay; they make sure they are still breathing and functioning. With this bill, we want to add that they are looking for any mental health issues in the child when they are doing that check-in.

SENATOR OHRENSCHALL:

It is really wonderful to see you tackle this issue. I think a lot of teenagers are maybe not aware of this issue and juvenile justice [overall]. Do you think if the bill passes and is signed into law by the Governor, that maybe children who are in juvenile detention facilities who might have an undiagnosed mental health concern might get connected with treatment that maybe they would not have without your bill? Do you think this might lead to more interventions on mental health issues that maybe had been undiagnosed before?

Ms. REGANTI:

Yes, the hope is that we are strengthening these partnerships between mental health professionals and these facilities. I know many youths are screened upon arrival, but obviously, being in confinement can bring up some underlying issues. The hope with this bill is that we are strengthening those relationships, and we are making sure that those kids are getting the help they need.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER HANSEN:

I want to add a little context as well just for the committee to understand how many youths fall in this realm of juveniles being detained in a juvenile facility.

At the state level in 2024, we had a total of about 1,480 [juveniles] in county facilities, and in state facilities, [we had] about 850. The good news is when it

came to corrective room restrictions, which is the terminology we use instead of solitary confinement, the majority of the youth are confined less than two hours. There are only less than 50 that ever hit the maximum in statute of 72 hours. The reason for this legislation is luckily for the minority that are going to be in longer than 24 hours, up to the 72-hour limit by statute—that those youth at the 24-hour mark would have a review.

The reason for the change in that language in the amendment that we totally support is assessment tends to be more of a medical term. As we were rolling this out on the Assembly side, we realized, especially for rural, that you do not always have a mental health professional on site all the time. How can they comply with some of the things we were asking for? After a lot of deliberation and collaboration, [we decided] that the youth would have at the 24-hour mark a review from a staff person to be able to recommend an actual assessment or look into their situation.

SENATOR HANSEN:

[Ms. Reganti,] you are 17, you're a senior at Sage Ridge [High School]—super impressive. You did an excellent presentation, and you're on top of all the issues. You and I discussed [the bill] briefly. I had no idea the depth of knowledge you had in our brief conversation.

When you are talking about a mental health screening by a person on staff, what are they looking for? What is that staff member actually supposed to try to find when doing this mental health evaluation?

MS. REGANTI:

They are not doing a mental health screening because the bill is only requiring that whoever is checking in on that child find out if they need a mental health screening. They are looking for signs of self-harm, depression and if they have been crying for hours. They are also looking for signs of suicidal thoughts that they can visibly see. Many of these staff are trained in suicide prevention, so they are familiar with what these symptoms look like and with what this child might be going through.

SENATOR HANSEN:

I have been so impressed with your presentation; you are 17 and are as poised as can be. Next time, ask me to be a cosponsor. I am kind of hurt by that, but I got it; [you] don't want to damage the bill.

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CHAIR SCHEIBLE:

I agree. Your presentation was incredibly impressive, and you have an excellent mentor by your side.

I noticed in the amendment, [Exhibit C](#), that in addition to removing the language about the 24-hour maximum—which I appreciate because people are not reaching the 72-hour maximum—the amendment also removed a restriction on the number of times juveniles could be placed in a restrictive room to seven per month, which was previously in the bill. I wonder if you could talk about why that was taken out.

MS. REGANTI:

Actually, that part of the original bill was saying that if a child is placed in corrective room restrictions seven times or more in a month, they can petition for a supervisor to look over that record and see if all these instances are truly fair and just. However, it is already in statute that their attorney or their caretaker can file or petition for a grievance if they feel their treatment is unfair, so we felt that it was unnecessary filing for the systems to be doing if there is already something similar in place.

CHAIR SCHEIBLE:

That makes perfect sense to me. We commend you on your excellent preparation and presentation today. We will move now to support testimony.

NICK SHEPACK (Fines and Fees Justice Center):

I am the Nevada State Director of the Fines and Fees Justice Center, and I sit on the board of Return Strong! I have had the pleasure of working with this body over multiple sessions on solitary confinement reform for adults. One thing I do want to make clear is that any time you lock an individual in a room they cannot get out of and they are alone, that is solitary confinement. You can call it whatever you want, but that is the definition. This bill takes an important first step in ensuring that we treat youth who are held in solitary properly; ensures that they get the mental health treatment they need and starts a very important conversation around this type of youth confinement that I hope continues in the sessions to come. We support this bill, and we encourage you to do the same.

ANGELA KNOTT (Washoe County Public Defender's Office):

We support [A.B. 167](#), and we are thankful to Assemblymember Hansen for bringing this issue to the forefront. We need to be talking about this. We need

to be talking about our children who are in confinement and the mental health issues that they are struggling with.

ADDISON CLARK:

I am here in support of A.B. 167 on behalf of teen mental health in Northern Nevada. Throughout my time being the chair of the Children's Cabinet Youth Mental Health Committee, we have done a significant amount of training in suicide prevention and identifying different struggles that teens may be dealing with. One of the things we learned throughout this training was that teens and children seem to feel the most isolated and alone when they feel like they can't talk to anybody. I have seen this work firsthand; I have done it for the past two to two-and-a-half years, and that is why we are in support of A.B. 167 today. I think that it is really important, and I really hope that you can support it as much as I do.

SABRINA SCHNUR (Nevada Psychiatric Association):

We are in support and thank the wonderful sponsors.

HARRISON EPSTEIN (Clark County Public Defender's Office):

I just wanted to say thank you to the bill sponsors for a wonderful presentation and to say that subjecting children to corrective room restriction inflicts a massive psychological toll. Enhancing access to mental healthcare for children after they've been placed in these corrective rooms is a measured step in lessening those psychological impacts. No child should ever be placed in solitary confinement, but if it will continue to exist as an option, it should be measured, only used as a last resort, and the children subjected to it should be given mental healthcare afterward if facility staff determine it is appropriate.

DENISE BOLAÑOS HEREDIA (Return Strong!):

We are here in strong support of A.B. 167. We've taken steps to limit this practice for adults in our State. Our children should not be the exception. Solitary confinement, no matter how it is labeled, has devastating impacts on young people's mental and emotional development. This bill ensures that if it is used, it is truly last-resort, time-limited and closely monitored. Most importantly, it affirms that every child deserves dignity, support and the opportunity to heal and grow. We urge you to support A.B. 167 and protect our youth from this deeply harmful practice.

SEBASTIAN RIOS:

I am a high school senior currently attending Leadership Academy of Nevada. I am testifying before you today in my personal capacity to express my support for A.B. 167. I hope to share key takeaways and points from the legislation that it would positively and strongly impact each community here in the State.

I currently serve on the Nevada Youth Legislature alongside Youth Legislator Reganti. As Ms. Reganti has shared, solitary confinement is an extremely important issue that affects youth and is currently affecting youth today.

We have learned that all confinement can be counterproductive to the goals of juvenile justice of reducing recidivism if the youths are not provided with proper care. Having positive social interaction outside of that environment is important and ensuring that fair and accountability-directed practices are taken is key, especially with our youngest citizens. The purpose of our juvenile justice system should be to mold our youth into good, law-abiding citizens, and an effective way to do this is to provide them with individual guidance.

Ensuring they have adequate mental health resources would guarantee they are making progress toward improvement and change. Many of these youths have the capacity to do great things in their communities. Recidivism is avoidable, so it is vital that we provide youth the tools they need to succeed.

To conclude, our juvenile justice system has the capacity to reduce recidivism and implement positive practices. In every child, there is hope that they may grow up to become a great citizen. The more chances we can provide them to build a positive mentality toward growth, the better our youth community will be for it. Together, we can build a more active, positive and success-driven youth community, which is dedicated to service and not crime. With that all being said, I support A.B. 167, and I hope it passes so that this could become a real impact.

ELIZABETH FLOREZ (Director, Department of Juvenile Services, Washoe County):

I am calling in support of A.B. 167 and wish to express my thanks to Assemblymember Hansen and Youth Legislator Sitara Reganti for having crafted this bill by working with juvenile justice agencies across the State to achieve a thoughtful and impactful piece of legislation.

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Facility staff are required under state law to complete extensive training in areas like signs of suicide, suicide prevention, trauma-informed care, juvenile rights and the proper use of room restriction. Additionally, *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 62C.035 requires a mental health screening for all youth booked into juvenile detention centers.

Corrective room restriction when used appropriately helps reduce uses of force and prevents violent situations from escalating. Assembly Bill 167 codifies the policies that already exist in local, regional and state facilities' responsibility to provide for the safety and well-being of youth in our care.

CHAIR SCHEIBLE:

I see no opposition or neutral testimony.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER HANSEN:

Thank you so much for the opportunity, and I am really going to just give my thanks, not only to this committee, but to all those who worked to help Ms. Reganti have a wonderful experience in learning how all this really works.

MS. REGANTI:

I would also like to express my gratitude for allowing me to present A.B. 167. This bill is the first step to addressing the mental health concerns for our youth in custody. We need to strengthen juvenile detention facilities' partnerships with mental health providers. Every juvenile in that system is the future of our State. We need to protect them, and we need to help them; A.B. 167 does that.

CHAIR SCHEIBLE:

I will close the hearing on A.B. 167 and open the hearing on A.B. 321.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 321 (2nd Reprint)**: Revises provisions relating to offenders.  
(BDR 16-1015)

ASSEMBLYMEMBER JOVAN A. JACKSON (Assembly District No. 6):

I am presenting A.B. 321 which is an important step for those who have successfully completed the firefighting program as an inmate. This bill gives them the chance to have that same opportunity when they are released out of incarceration.

Our State, like many western states, faces increasing wildlife risk and a growing need for skilled firefighters. At the same time, formerly incarcerated individuals often struggle to find stable employment and housing after release from prison. Many of these individuals have gained valuable skills working on firefighter crews and conservation camps while in custody but face barriers to continue this work after being released due to a lack of transitional support and employment pathways.

Assembly Bill 321 addresses these issues by creating new opportunities for reentry and workforce development. The bill authorizes a transitional housing and training program for eligible offenders and establishes a hiring program to help former offenders transition into professional firefighting roles with the Division of Forestry by connecting them to reentry support with critical workforce needs. Assembly Bill 321 helps break down the cycle of recidivism, supports public safety and strengthens our State's wildlife response.

Section 4.5 authorizes the director of the Department of Corrections, in coordination with the Division of Forestry, to establish a transitional housing program for offenders that are eligible for minimal security and have previously been denied parole solely because they lack other available transitional housing. This program will provide training in forestry management and conservation, equipping participants with the skills and experience needed for successful reentry.

I had discussions with the Department of Corrections and Assemblymember PK O'Neill, and we learned that some individuals are being denied parole solely because of the lack of stable housing. This program is designed not only to provide safe housing but also to offer training in forestry management and conservation. By doing so, it gives participants the opportunity to develop marketable skills and prepares them for successful reentry [into society].

Section 5 of the bill requires the State Forester Firewarden to establish a hiring program specifically designed to provide a pathway for former offenders who worked on firefighting crews and conservation camps to be appointed to the firefighting positions within the Division of Forestry. To be eligible, however, they must have served as a former offender assigned to a conservation camp program. I thought it was important that we have these guidelines in here because I know each state has different requirements on who they allow to be an inmate-firefighter.

These individuals who will be allowed to be hired by law would only be individuals that served in the Department of Corrections (DOC). They also must have successfully completed the required firefighting training. Also, they must attain any necessary certifications for employment as a firefighter with the Division of Forestry and meet other qualifications established by the State Forester Firewarden. We really feel that these individuals are more than qualified, maybe more qualified than an average person, and that the process should be competitive and even with being competitive that they will still have a great opportunity to be hired. The State Forester Firewarden is also authorized to adopt regulations to implement this hiring program. I will pass the rest of the presentation to Mr. Shaun Griffin.

SHAUN GRIFFIN (Nevada Prison Education Project):

I am grateful to be here to support A.B. 321 and Assemblymember Jackson's bill. I have been volunteering out at the prison in Northern Nevada, a correctional center, for over 30 years teaching poetry.

Every night when I go out there, we get to the end of this discussion and it usually goes like this: "When I get out of prison, I am going to be able to do X," and there's a long silence in the room. About half the guys in my room are lifers, meaning they are not getting out; the other half are younger, meaning they are. The lifers do not answer, and then after the silence goes away, I say something like this, "You are going to need three things to get out. You're going to need a supportive community, you're going to need a place to live, and you are going to need a job," and they all look at me like, "Well, that is easy. I have got that wired and I got that down," and I say, "Well, look around the room and see who's not responding; see who's not saying a word."

I have worked with over 200 people in this time; I have stopped counting. Most of them have stayed out, and most of them have not gone back. We've lowered the recidivism rate on the yard, we've saved everybody money, but best of all, we have given these men their agency and self-worth back. That happened because in all those cases except a very small number, someone cared enough to watch out for them when they had virtually nothing, and now they do.

Getting this job that Assemblymember Jackson is talking about is huge. Why has this not happened before? I just do not know. This is a no-brainer. This legislation should have been done a long time ago. If you can fight fires when

you are locked up, you can fight fires when you are outside. This is a huge step forward, and it is something we need to support.

Governor Joe Lombardo appointed me the State Poet Laureate one year ago, and if you do not believe what I am telling you right now, I encourage you to walk out of here when you are done with the committee today and go into the lobby to read the poems that are standing on those easels [made] by the men in my workshop. That's who I am teaching. Those are some of the men that are going to get out, some who sadly left us and some who will not get out, but all of them hold out this hope that there is a world for them to walk into and rebuild their lives. That is the only reason I go out there; it is not to teach poetry. I love poetry but is to help them find a way forward in the middle of all this chaos that is called the justice system, and it is chaos.

The other night, my wife was singing in a choir, and the conductor, a Jewish man, talked about the origins of the last song they sang. He quoted Micah 6:8, "Do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God." That is why I am here.

SENATOR HANSEN:

Is anybody here from the Division of Forestry? I am just wondering because I know they've used inmates to fight fires and stretch fences and all sorts of things over the years. I am just wondering how many people in a normal year participate in that. How many people can this [bill] potentially help employ when they get out? Is it 10 a year or 100 a year? Does anybody have any clue? We have 13,000 inmates and, actually, probably less than that now. I do not know what the percentage is. Out of 13,000, if 10 percent get out every year, it is 1,300. How many theoretically could actually be employed in that transitory window when they are getting out and reenter society through this program? Do you have any ideas?

PALOMA GUERRERO (Clark County Public Defender's Office):

Kacey KC, who is the State Forester Firewarden for the Division of Forestry, was at the last presentation on the Assembly side. I did hear her speak on this issue.

The conservation camps are a partnership between the Division of Forestry and the DOC and have been going on since 1958. She said at the height of it that they had about 30 working groups, and each of those working groups had

about 10 people, but now there are shortages. She says she only has about two to three working groups and they are having to hire from out of state. This is definitely a way to help fulfill some of those shortages, and that will help them a lot.

One of the things that they asked for was section 4.5 of the bill, which is sort of a two-step program that they are mirroring off of Arizona so that people who are on parole can also begin to start on these programs, and then once they are off of parole, they can be hired on as well. I do not have exact numbers, but I can try and get those for you as well.

SENATOR HANSEN:

That gives me an idea. The transitional housing you are talking about are the conservation camps primarily?

MS. GUERRERO:

Their transitional housing language is an enabling language. That's something that they asked for so they can try to make these transitional housing programs so that they can begin on the workforce program but also provide the therapy and counseling that they need to continue and be successful.

SENATOR HANSEN:

This is for inmates that are still on parole, right? Okay, good. It sounds like a great idea. We want to get people back on their feet, and this seems like a very good transitional window to allow that as they transition from being full-time prisoners to back in society. It gives them an opportunity to make some money and get some stability without having a guard over them 24/7. It sounds like a great idea.

CHAIR SCHEIBLE:

I know that in past sessions, we have heard that individuals who fight fires while they are incarcerated then leave the Department of Corrections and are unable to get hired by the Department of Forestry. I have never completely understood if that was a certification thing or a criminal record issue. Can you explain to me what A.B. 321 changes to solve that problem?

MS. GUERRERO:

The Division of Forestry does hire formerly incarcerated people that have gone through the program, but right now, it is sort of just a policy, and policies can

change. Assembly Bill 321 codifies [this policy] so that people who have risked their lives fighting our wildfires here have that direct pathway to employment and there are no sorts of barriers or no sorts of changes that can happen.

From what I have learned from Ms. KC, the Division of Forestry provides all of the certifications that they need; then they provide the same certifications for incarcerated people as they do for any of their paid workers as well. One of the barriers that she mentioned is having an identification because some people do not have an identification when they are released. Some of the barriers that other people think about is that there's a difference between local and government firefighters and the Division of Forestry's firefighters. Right now, the Division of Forestry does hire, and besides having identification, it sounds like if they've gone through the program, they are good to be hired on. Of course, local [or] governmental firefighters have other certifications, like an EMT, where they have those sorts of barriers for criminal records.

CHAIR SCHEIBLE:

In section 4.5, subsections 1 and 2, the individuals who are eligible for this housing program have to have been previously denied parole solely due to the lack of other available transitional housing. I am trying to understand what that looks like. I will just be upfront; my concern is that I hope we are not excluding people just because they have not already gone through parole and been denied, and that we are able to catch them on the front end when they are in front of the parole board. If the issue is, "Oh, we can't grant this person parole simply because they do not have housing," we can route them directly to the Division of Forestry's program and not have to deny their parole first. I am hoping you can clarify for me what this looks like in practice.

Ms. GUERRERO:

Yes, that is language on the bill currently. That was from speaking with the Division of Forestry and the DOC, and that is what they wanted the program to look like, so this is how the language ended up there. I do agree with you that it would be better if it was before they were denied parole. This is just language that they wanted in those conversations.

CHAIR SCHEIBLE:

That is satisfactory to me.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER JACKSON:

The bigger goal of this bill was to start the conversations around there being a workforce development for people on parole. This permissive language was to open that dialogue, with hopes to carry a bill next session where people on parole—and they do not have to be denied housing—will have the opportunity to have a workforce development with the Division of Forestry while on parole.

SENATOR OHRENSCHALL:

If the bill passes and is signed into law, do you think that folks who transition into being firefighters for Forestry might be able to pursue careers in local fire departments as well? If they get this experience, once they've done their time and paid their debt to society, might be able to pursue other careers like the fire department, EMT and things like that?

Ms. GUERRERO:

For that to happen, the localities need to change some of their policies because to get your EMT certification, I know there is still the barrier of having a criminal record on there, so some things would need to change on the local level.

Ms. KC said before that the reason why they are able to hire on—and the Division of Forestry is different from the more local government firefighters—is that they do not have EMTs. They do not require it; they do not require their personnel to have any sort of drugs or administer drugs. Hopefully in the future, if we have these experienced people with qualifications who have been out fighting fires, then they could maybe be eligible for local government employment. But right now, there are just too many barriers with having a criminal record and the certifications that they have to have on the local level.

CHAIR SCHEIBLE:

We'll move now into support testimony for A.B. 321.

MR. SHEPACK:

We are always looking for ways to ensure that individuals successfully reenter society. Until we eliminate all fees in the system, people need a way to pay those, and employment upon release is one of those key factors. The forestry firefighting has been a mess for many seasons where it seems like people can work and it seems like people can't. This bill creates a clear pathway to ensure that people who are well-trained as firefighters can continue doing that work and, secondly, that individuals who are being released on parole, at least a

subset of them, have that opportunity to join into these training programs and this type of transitional housing. I think it will help alleviate a major problem, which is wildland firefighting in our rural [areas]. Also, it will give people opportunities [and reduce] recidivism. It is a great bill, and we strongly support it.

TARA WEBSTER (Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada):

I am the policy manager with the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada here in support of A.B. 321. We believe that the State should recognize the contributions of previously incarcerated individuals and provide them with opportunities to pursue meaningful and rewarding careers after they've served their time.

DOUG UNGER (Nevada Prison Education Project):

The Nevada Prison Education Project is an independent organization that includes teachers from colleges and universities in the Nevada System of Higher Education, several community groups, justice-impacted students and the Department of Corrections. We all work together to improve and expand prison education in our State.

We wish to acknowledge the invaluable and life-risking work that some of the incarcerated in our State contribute to fighting wildfires that threaten and ravage our State. Assembly Bill 321 will augment and recommend a clear pathway for formerly incarcerated firefighters to pursue further training, and upon their release, be able to join the workforce as professionals who perform this vital service. Approving A.B. 321 will help to provide post-incarceration housing and employment that can restore self-esteem and dignity and reduce recidivism. We stand in support. We thank Assemblymember Jackson for bringing forward and presenting this bill.

Ms. HEREDIA:

We [Return Strong!] strongly support A.B. 321. We saw during the recent wildfires in Los Angeles how incarcerated firefighters played a critical role in protecting these communities despite knowing they'd face barriers in doing that same job once released. Our State benefits when people coming home from prison can use the skills they've learned to contribute, support their families and reduce their chances of returning to prison. Assembly Bill 321 is about second chances, and second chances are not just about someone proving that they deserve one. They also demand a society that sees people as more than their

worst mistake. We want to thank Assemblymember Jackson for bringing this bill, and we urge you to support it.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER JACKSON:

These inmates are ultimately risking their lives to protect and serve the State. They are minimum-risk inmates. They work on these fire sites with no police supervision and no law enforcement supervision. They work with axes, chainsaws and many tools within communities on the sides of highways and ranches, and they are able to do this job while incarcerated. We just want to lift them up and allow them by law to be hired by the Division of Forestry, the same organization that they were hired by when they were incarcerated.

MR. GRIFFIN:

One of my major projects as the State Poet Laureate is to try and get a creative writing program started in every prison in the State. Tonight, we start in Southern Desert; this will be our fourth prison we are going into. The reason we are doing that is that once these individuals take these workshops, they stay out of prison. When they get out of prison, they need to do something; they need to find a job, and this bill will help them get that job. I think it is essential that we make that possibility happen.

The political climate is pretty hot in our country right now, but this bill is about kindness, this bill is about mercy, this bill is about forgiveness, and I know that we can do this.

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CHAIR SCHEIBLE:

I will now close the hearing on A.B. 321. The committee has received two letters ([Exhibit D](#)) in support. Seeing no public comment, we are adjourned at 1:56 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Timothy Gibbs,  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Senator Melanie Scheible, Chair

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>EXHIBIT SUMMARY</b>				
<b>Bill</b>	<b>Exhibit Letter</b>	<b>Introduced on Minute Report Page No.</b>	<b>Witness / Entity</b>	<b>Description</b>
	A	1		Agenda
	B	1		Attendance Roster
A.B. 167	C	2	Assemblymember Alexis M. Hansen	Proposed Amendment: Clark County
A.B. 321	D	19	Senator Melanie Scheible	Letters in Support